

REMARKS

Claims 1, 22, 23 and 26 are amended to correct minor errors of form. No new matter has been added as a result of these amendments.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given to this case. The Examiner has restricted claims in this case to three distinct inventions designated as Invention I, claims 1-4, 6-10, 12, 13, 22, 23, 34 and 35, drawn to a method and a system for securely storing an electronic data file; Invention II, claims 14-16, 24 and 25, drawn to a system for transmitting a secure data file; and Invention III, claims 27-33, drawn to a method and a system for accessing a secure electronic file. It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has inappropriately restricted the claims of the instant case to a number of distinct inventions and sub-combinations without consideration of the relationship between the inventions. Applicants respectfully traverse the Restriction Requirement and request reconsideration. In order to be fully responsive, Applicants have provisionally elected, with traverse, the invention of Invention I drawn to claims 1-4, 6-10, 12, 13, 22, 23, 34 and 35. By this election, Applicants do not admit, nor do Applicants waive the right to argue against at a later date, the Examiner's statement that the groups of inventions are patentably distinct. Applicants expressly reserve the right to present the claims of Invention II, Invention III, and/or other claims, in one or more divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part applications at a later date.

The Examiner has stated that Invention I has separate utility such as securely storing, Invention II has separate utility such as transmitting an electronic data file, and Invention III has separate utility such as accessing a secure electronic file. Claim 7 (Invention I) is a method claim directed to securely storing an electronic file. Claim 14 (Invention II) is a system claim that includes subsystems that perform similar functions to the limitations of claim 7. The claims depending from each of claims 7 and 14 likewise perform similar functions. In addition, claims 27 and 28 (Invention III) perform functions that are similar to claim 3 (Invention I). Moreover, each of claims 22 and 23 (Invention I) also describe providing "access" to a data file as the Examiner states is the subject matter of Invention III. In other words, rather than describing three separate inventions as stated by the Examiner, the claims describe aspects of a single invention. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the search classification for each group will substantially overlap. Accordingly, the Examiner will not be seriously burdened by searching and considering the inventions described in all of the restricted claims.

Accordingly, the Examiner has not established a proper restriction requirement under MPEP §803, and it is respectfully submitted that the restriction requirement should be withdrawn, and that the Application is now in condition for examination and allowance on the merits. Notice to such effect is requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph T. Helmsen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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